

# Air station conducts business as unusual

by **Martin Schnoor**  
**Total Quality Trainer**

Given the current situation in American government, it wasn't hard for any of us to forecast a movement toward the reform of our business practices. A crystal ball wasn't necessary, you could put away your old ouija board, the time had come. We had BRAC'd until Congress could take it no more. The move was entirely welcomed within the military community, once the handwriting was on the wall, but of course, those folks in uniform aren't looking for votes from unemployed constituents.

The reality sets in though, when the Commandant of the Marine Corps says, "The bucks stop here." Financing tomorrow's Marine Corps requires effective stewardship of resources today.

As Dr. W.E. Deming once said, "When should you start? Yesterday isn't soon enough." Our own air station Commander, Col. Richard Dunn has been quoted in print saying, "What we are undertaking here in Iwakuni is business as unusual." And it certainly is.

The Business Reform Initiative, was begun to find ways to overcome our traditional ways of doing business, provided those traditions are set in anything other than focused customer service. The "R" in BRI does not stand for reduction, but there are some dinosaurs out there who still don't see the other train on our track. There have been all kinds of initiatives, advertised to do "all manner of things thereunto pertaining" — from Management By Objective to Quality Circles to Statistical Process Control to Total Quality Management/Leadership to Quality in Daily Work to Business Process Reengineering and today we are staring down the road towards Activity Based Costing/Management.

So, what's a person to do? Where to start? What's the first step? How do I prepare for all of this? The answer is so simple it will scare you. If you are reading these words to yourself, say this aloud ... " I am not an old dog who can't learn new tricks. I will pick up books

on these subjects and read them. I will encourage others to do the same. I will stretch my mind. I will apply these things to the way I manage my day-to-day operations. I will become a better steward of the resources entrusted to me. I will be more curious about why I do things the way I do them. I don't have to do it by myself."

The place to start is right here in Kansas, Dorothy. We have customers to take care of who have needs. If they didn't, our jobs would be unnecessary. All of the above philosophies would be totally for naught if they discounted the people we are employed to serve ... our customers. Our customers are the next process in the endless chain of suppliers and customers. Without customers our jobs are not jobs at all, rather they become hobbies — expensive hobbies.

Understanding our customer's needs is a function of examining our mission in life. So many organizations, even individuals are the proud owners of a mission statement. If you've been out in public in the last five years you have seen one somewhere. As we read them we wonder if the employees they represent are aware of their contents. Who are their customers? What do they provide to those customers? How do they do it? Most of us occupy spaces in the food chain that are so far south that our missions are pretty clearly defined for us when we show up for work. Our responsibility then becomes how to best provide the products and/or services detailed in those mission statements.

Process focus is another important aspect of organizing for improvement. Are we in the business of burning the toast, scraping it, and then serving it to our customers? Do we have a standardized way of doing business? Is it capable of meeting our customer's needs? Are our customers actually our victims? How about our employees, do they take heat for a process they can't change? Is there a training program available to teach all of those employees how to do their jobs? Does our organizational structure enhance or impede providing for our

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## Our Cover

**Lorrie Ballesteros has no problems breaking a board in two as part of the Taekwondo demonstration at the MCCS Health Promotions 3rd Annual Health Fair at the Main Gym Saturday. See Page 11 for story. (photo by Cpl. Michael Wiener)**

## Torii Teller

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customer's needs?

This brings up an important question: Are you successful because of the system you work in? Yet another question: Are you more successful when you work around the system? OK, one more question: Whose responsibility is that system? Give these three questions the thought they deserve, especially if you are in a position to influence that system.

Leadership is not just "a bunch of people doing what I say." Leaders provide a focus, a direction and a purpose to those in their charge. Consider the power of focus. Picture a small child with a magnifying glass. The creativity of that young mind can capture the power of the source of life in this solar system, the sun itself. All of those burned leaves on the sidewalk are proof that it doesn't take a genius to get some impressive work done — just someone who is aware of the power of focus.

All right, by now you might have deduced the author to be a hopeless pessimist, au contraire, my glass is just really big. I expect that it will be at least half full, and the contents tasty.

No one has to tell us that one of the most difficult things any of us will encounter in any walk of life is change. The very thing that makes change difficult is that it is different than what we might be used to, it may be unusual, it may be unconventional, it may go against well established personal or organizational paradigms. But there is hope. The world is not flat. Set sail on a course to a healthier Corps, the journey most certainly will not take you off the edge of the Earth. But it will take you places you've never been before. Are you game? What is there to lose? If we discover that we are truly effective and efficient at providing for our customers, how many other organizations would benefit from the benchmark we provide.

Being truly world class isn't necessarily telling people how good you are at what you do. It requires action. A wise man once said, "the man who rests on his laurels will soon become restless." The world is a changing place, we have the option, Deming also said, "Change is mandatory ... survival is not."

The Marine Corps has just signed one of the largest contracts of its kind with ABC Tech [www.abctech.com](http://www.abctech.com), a corporation out of Beaverton, Ore., to begin to mobilize some of the resident knowledge within the Corps on the road to increased effectiveness. The methodology/tool that will be the catalyst for these efforts is called Activity Based Costing/Management. Many of the questions asked are familiar to us. Is the process clearly defined? Are there steps that are of a limited value or no value to our customers or us? Much of the training we've already received along the lines of process management/process reengineering will equip us to be successful in this endeavor. Putting together a comprehensive program of process and activity definition/management/improvement coupled with an effective costing strategy will give us the best view of our organizational health that we've ever had.

Using statistical measures based on customer needs and value along with the process knowledge we currently possess will position us to make a healthier Corps in the 21st century. By reforming our current methods of doing business, we are not only enabling the financing of the future capabilities of our Corps; we are shaping that future. You have a voice in this process. Will it be a still, silent voice? Will you join in the challenge to shape our future? Either way, you won't be alone, but what a satisfying endeavor it would be to have a part, no matter how small, in ensuring the future security of our children, our nation, our world. What a satisfying feeling to have written some of the proud history of our Corps for future generations to read.

## Community

### MORE MESSAGES from Page 3

#### **Gunny Huizar,**

I fell in love with you the first time I looked into your eyes!  
"Today-tomorrow-forever"  
- Your Hillbilly wife

Happy Birthday my Valentine's sweetheart. Thank you for taking care of our boys. Love,  
- B

#### **Silvia,**

My best friend, wife and mother of our children: When all is said and done you know it's true. I am always at my best, when it comes to loving you. Happy Valentine's Day  
- Ralph G. Jr.

#### **Chyenne,**

Light of my life, you're the best, I love you with all my heart, I hope that you have the best Valentine's Day ever. From the SgtMaj with the ATTITUDE  
- Daddy

#### **Mooch,**

You're a good daughter and friend and I love you.  
- Mommy

#### **Babe**

Good and strong, for us. Love you always,  
- Bubbles

#### **La,**

Won't you be mine?  
Happy Birthday and

Valentine's Day. Here's to another great 10 years. Love,  
- Lou

#### **Ashley and Amber,**

I feel like the luckiest father in the world to have been blessed with the two of you. I love you both so very much. Love,  
- Dad

